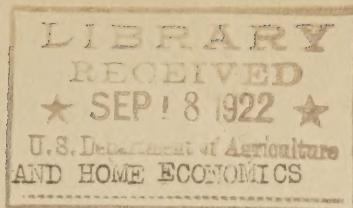


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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE

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Following is a brief statement regarding some of the outstanding features in animal husbandry for the year 1921 as submitted by E. W. Sheets, Acting Chief, Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry.

The purebred hog business has reached a more stable basis than it occupied immediately following the period of high prices which were in vogue at the close of the war and for a period of months subsequent to this. The "boom" prices which were so general among purebred sows and sows have disappeared and prices commensurate with the individual qualities of animals have brought the purebred business back to normal. The breeding of sows for both spring and fall litters was greater than for the previous year. During the period when corn was very low in price, protein feeds were high and because of this, they were not used as extensively as they should have been nor as they ordinarily have been used under usual conditions. This probably explains why the farrowed pigs were extremely weak and why the mortality at farrowing and during the suckling period was so great in the spring of 1922. During 1921, farmers suffered great losses from cholera among hogs, in all probability due to the less extensive vaccination which was practiced when hog prices began to drop to low levels. In general it may be stated that the swine business is being conducted at the present time on a sound basis and there is every indication that, where economically carried on, it will result in fair profits.

The problem relating to determining the efficiency and economy of horses for various farm operations is engaging the attention of specialists in horse husbandry in cooperation with other bureaus of the department. The results obtained thus far in the corn belt and the wheat belt indicate that the horse furnishes the most economical power for practically all farm drawbar operations.

Throughout the year prices for fat lambs have been fairly satisfactory. Immediately following the extension of the emergency tariff on wool by Congress last November, demand for good wool was revived and since that time has been strong or at least in a healthy state, resulting in the renewal of remunerative prices, especially for fine and medium wools. These conditions have caused the sheep men of the range states to become encouraged and many have renewed their determination to stay by the business regardless of the heavy financial losses they suffered during the period of depression. Range men are unusually eager for reliable advice from workers of the Department of Agriculture and State colleges of agriculture relative to improved methods of range management. The faith of the farm sheep raisers has in general been strengthened by the favorable prices for lambs and wool. Throughout the entire country there is a healthy demand for superior breeding sheep and a large percentage of the owners of good sized flocks or bands are alert to the business aspects of sheep production.

Breeders of Angora goats have been encouraged by the strong demand for choice fine mohair. The union of South Africa has recently repealed the embargo which has for many years prevented the Angora breeders of the United States from securing fresh breeding stock from that important Angora region. In case livestock health conditions of South Africa are favorable to importation into the United States, it appears that high class South African Angoras will be purchased by American breeders for the improvement and extension of high class mohair production in this country.

Demand is widespread and prices are high for superior milk goats. The investigations of the Bureau of Animal Industry indicate that the milk of goats is useful for infants and invalids and especially for persons having weak stomachs. As foot and mouth disease prevails in Switzerland, the native home of the improved breeds of milk goats, importation of milk goats into the United States direct from Switzerland is impossible. This condition is retarding the development of high class milk goats in the United States. Nevertheless the American Milk Goat Record Association is endeavoring to assist in this connection by recording animals having five top crosses of purebred registered sires and it appears that the quality of milk goats is being gradually improved.

Investigations in the corn belt have been carried on for four years to determine the basic requirements in feed, labor, and miscellaneous items in fattening beef cattle. From 18,000 to 20,000 head of cattle have been involved in each year of the survey. From the data obtained it will be possible to determine which combinations of feed are most suitable for certain sections and also the amounts of feed in various combinations that will be required to make 100 pounds of gain. These data, which will be based on thousands of steers, will be very valuable to cattle feeders as the most desirable ration for certain sections may be determined in advance of the feeding period or after one has a fairly good idea of what the various feed prices will be for the coming feeding period.

The range investigations are being carried on to determine the cost and methods of producing cattle on the western ranges. A general survey has been made in the States of Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, for the purpose of acquiring the cooperation of beef cattle producers who maintain representative establishments, employ modern methods of range management, and who are in position to give reliable records. Efforts are being made to determine the unit of production in the various sections of the western States and the proper methods of feeding and management of beef cattle under the various conditions. Investigations have been carried on at Lewisburg, West Virginia, to determine the value of various roughages supplemented with corn and cottonseed meal in wintering steers. Three year's work will be completed in September. So far, a ration of silage, mixed hay, and cottonseed meal has given the most satisfactory results in wintering steers.

For a period during and after the war, well-managed poultry enterprises returned a profit per hen of \$6.00 or \$7.00 in one year. As a result the amount of poultry kept has increased to such an extent that this year there was a decided increase in the number of eggs shipped into the city markets. At the present time there are about 1,500,000 more cases of eggs in storage than last year and approximately 1,000,000 more than in 1919, when there were more eggs in storage than ever before. Shipments of live poultry and dressed poultry have also increased so that 435 more cars of live poultry and 200,000 more packages of dressed poultry have been received in New York since January 1, than during the same period last year. This enormous increase in production has, of course, resulted in lower prices for eggs and poultry than at any time since the war. At the same time, feed and labor costs have also dropped so that under economical management the margin of profit is probably better than in the prewar period. The production of first quality eggs, of course, increases the profits since the best eggs of the New York market are bringing 8 to 10 cents more than eggs of ordinary good quality, and the difference amounts to 20 cents more as compared with the ordinary run of eggs. The interest in the production of poultry meat in the form of capons and soft roasters is reviving. Many of the farms in the Northeast that were forced out of business on account of high feed costs during the war, are starting up again. An evidence that the interests in the meat breeds is reviving and is perhaps stronger than ever, is the fact that an attempt is being made this year to have the new American meat breed, the Jersey Black Giant, admitted to the Standard of Perfection. The outlook for the poultry industry as a whole appears to be excellent. Cheaper feed and labor costs have offset the lower prices of poultry products, and by efficient management and the production of high quality eggs and meat, poultry enterprises should be quite profitable.

